



# Casualty Services Program

*The Commander's Role in  
Casualty Events*

*MSgt Alan Freeman  
AF Casualty Services Branch  
Randolph AFB TX SN 665-  
3505*

# OVERVIEW

**AFPC**



- Casualty event definition
- Commander's role in various casualty scenarios

# DEFINITION

**AFPC**



- A casualty event is:
  - Any occurrence where a servicemember is lost to the organization through
    - Illness
    - Injury
    - Missing
    - Death

# SCENARIO 1

**AFPC**



- Airman dies in an automobile accident
  - Base Security Forces are notified by local authorities
    - Desk Sergeant informs:
      - Installation Commander
      - Member's Squadron Commander
      - Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR)
    - In this example, spouse and children reside in local area

# SCENARIO 1 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



## ■ Commander's Role

- Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR) will provide notification guidance
- You notify NOK in person
- Take along a chaplain and medical representative, if available
- Consider taking a friend of the family
- Provide known circumstances
- Determine who will notify other family members
  - Advise CAR of decision

# SCENARIO 1 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- Advise NOK that an Air Force representative will contact her/him within 24 hours to make a casualty assistance visit
- CAR will explain and assist family members in claiming benefits and entitlements

# SCENARIO 1 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- Next duty day provide CAR with information on:
  - Any marital discord
  - Any records of misconduct or investigation
- This information helps determine if a CSAF condolence letter is appropriate
  - Letters are prepared by HQ AFPC Casualty Services Branch

# SCENARIO 1 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Send a circumstance/condolence letter within 5 calendar days--Be careful!**
  - Circumstances not necessary if already informed
  - Have CAR review the letter prior to dispatch for compliance with AFI 36-3002
  - Maintain copy for your records
- **Remain available to family**
- **Maintain contact with Military Personnel Flight Commander and CAR to assist in resolving claims or problems**

# SCENARIO 2

**AFPC**



- **F-15 pilot ejects during over-water mission**
  - **SAR finds debris but not pilot**
- **A group of airmen go on a fishing trip and one falls out of boat into swift, deep, frigid waters**
  - **Local authorities initiate a SAR operation**

# SCENARIO 2 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Contact CAR for guidance in placing member in Duty Status-Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN)**

**DUSTWUN:** *is a 10-day transitory casualty status used by commanders when they suspect a member's absence is involuntary and member may be a casualty. The commander does not feel there is sufficient evidence to make a determination of missing or deceased*

- **Notify member's family of status and SAR**

# SCENARIO 2 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Provide family and CAR with daily SAR updates**
  - **Extent of search, participants and findings**
  - **When SAR discontinued, (e.g., weather) why, and when it will resume**
  - **Witness statements, if available**
  - **Estimation of how long airman could survive**
- **CAR submits daily search progress report to HQ AFPC Casualty Services Branch**

# SCENARIO 2 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Within 10 days, you, with the help of your legal staff, medical, OSI, Security Forces, must decide between three possible determinations:**
  - **Death**
  - **Missing**
  - **Absent Without Leave (AWOL) / Deserter**
  - **Returned to Military Control (RMC)**

# SCENARIO 2 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Death determination is appropriate when evidence indicates death is the only plausible explanation for member's absence**
  - **Recovery of remains is not a prerequisite**
- **CAR submits proper casualty reports**
- **CAR provides casualty assistance as indicated in Scenario 1**

# SCENARIO 2 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **If, after 10 days, the situation indicates the member could have survived, the commander must:**
  - **Consult with AFPC Missing Persons Branch prior to placing member in missing status--to determine proper subcategory**
  - **Submit AF Form 484, Missing Persons Supplemental Report 5 days after SAR is suspended**
  - **Invoke the Missing Persons Act -requires consultation with AFPC/DPWCM**

# SCENARIO 2 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Choosing AWOL or Missing**
  - **Consider all factors good & bad**
    - ♦ **Outstanding worker/NCO**
    - **Out of character for member to go AWOL**
    - **Member had troubled relationships**
    - **Suspicious financial transactions**
    - **Remarks made to others**

# SCENARIO 3

**AFPC**



- **Member injured while TDY**
  - **Family is not in the local area**
  - **The attending physician and medical treatment facility (MTF) commander determine family presence would aid in the recovery of the member and request Invitational Travel Orders (EFMTs)**
    - **2 family members**
    - **Not for compassionate reasons**
    - **AF pays for travel**

# SCENARIO 3 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **If member is able to communicate, honor the member's desires on family notification**
  - You may decide that notification is necessary even if member doesn't want to do it
- **If member is unable to communicate, all family members listed on the DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data, must be notified by either the:**
  - Commander
  - Primary next of kin (PNOK)
  - AFPC Casualty Services Branch

# SCENARIO 3 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Notify family by telephone**
  - Explain known circumstances and member's condition
- **Provide medical update to family**
  - If stationed overseas and family is in CONUS, or stationed in CONUS and family is overseas, AFPC Casualty Services Branch does the notification and medical updates

# SCENARIO 3 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **Commander's Role**
  - **Meet family when they arrive**
  - **Assign a unit representative to act as a personal escort**
  - **Arrange for quarters and meals**
  - **Assist family where needed**
  - **Notify CAR when family is ready to return home**

# SCENARIO 3 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- AFPC Casualty Services Branch makes all travel arrangements using N & N Travel
- Transportation costs are paid by AFPC Casualty Services Branch through a special account
  - Reimbursement to NOK who travel at their own expense prior to EFMT approval can be made
  - Again, incidental expenses such as food, lodging and local transportation are the responsibility of the family
- Don't obligate the Air Force



- **Imminent Death**

- **When: Medical authorities believe the member's injuries or illness will cause or lead to death within 72 hours**
- **Why: In **EVERY** case it's **ALWAYS** **financially advantageous for the survivors if the member dies in a retired status!****

# SCENARIO 4 (Cont'd)

**AFPC**



- **The two primary advantages are:**
  - **Survivor Benefit Plan**: Provides beneficiary a monthly annuity up to 55 percent of the member's retired pay upon member's death
    - ♦ Retiree death - SBP options include spouse only coverage, spouse and child coverage, child only coverage, insurable interest coverage and Supplemental SBP coverage
    - When a member dies on active duty, SBP options are limited to spouse and children coverage and no Supplemental SBP is available



- **National Service Life Insurance (NSLI):** Members granted a service-connected disability may apply to the VA for up to \$10,000 life insurance coverage at standard insurance rates within 2 years of being rated disabled
  - Members rated 100 percent disabled may apply for a waiver of premiums
  - Members eligible for the waiver may obtain an additional policy of up to \$20,000
  - But, premiums cannot be waived on the additional (\$20,000) insurance

# When In Charge - Take Charge!

**AFPC**



- **CAR**
- **Use Commander's Call with emphasis on:**
  - **Virtual Record of Emergency Data (vRED)**
  - **SGLV 8286, Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI)**
  - **Invite CAR to explain what assistance will be provided to spouses and families**
- **Work with the experts in legal, security forces, OSI, chaplain and medical communities when faced with the tough decisions**



# We are here to help

- Call AFPC Casualty Services Branch any time you need additional assistance
  - Commercial 1-800-433-0048
  - DSN 665-3505
- We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week